

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1 to 9 and 15 to 16 are currently pending.

Claim 1 is independent.

Claims 3 to 9 are allowed or allowable.

Claim 1 is amended by this paper. The amendment to Claim 1 is supported by page 6, line 28 to page 7 line 2 of the Applicant's specification.

Allowed and Allowable Claims

The Applicants thank the EXAMINER for indicating that Claims 3 to 9 would be allowed if submitted in proper form.

Objections to the Drawings

The EXAMINER objects to the drawings stating, "the structure recited in claims 4, 9 and 15 must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s)." (Office Action, page 2, lines 9-10). Claims 4 and 9 state "the counterbalance comprises a spring."

According to Applicant's specification, "The inventive wafer carrier opener 101a may also include a counterbalancing mechanism adapted to bias the wafer carrier door receiver 103 upwardly." (Application, page 8, lines 15-17). Additionally, "the counterbalancing mechanism may comprise an extension 135 of [a] horizontally stationary member 107 that extends above the elevation of the wafer carrier door receiver 103, and a biasing mechanism 137 coupled between the extension 135 and the wafer carrier door receiver 103 as shown in FIGS. 3A-C." (Application, page 8, lines 20-25).

Further, "The biasing mechanism 137 may comprise a spring, a cylinder, a counterweight, or any mechanism that may bias the wafer carrier door receiver 103 upwardly so as to resist the gravitational force that otherwise may move the wafer carrier

door receiver 103 vertically downward." (Application, page 8, lines 25-30). Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that a counterbalance (which may comprise a spring) is generally shown, for example, in FIGS. 3A-C and thus the drawings show the structure recited in Claims 4 and 9.

Claim 15 recites a "wafer carrier opener" and "wafer carrier platform, adapted to receive a sealed wafer carrier". According to Applicant's specification, "the wafer carrier loading station 15 comprises a wafer carrier platform 41 adapted to receive a pod 43 and the conventional wafer carrier opener 37 adapted to engage and unlatched a pod door 45 as is known in the art". (Application, page 5, lines 1-4, referring to FIGS. 3A-C). Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that a wafer carrier opener, wafer carrier platform and a pod, which is an example of a sealed wafer carrier, are shown, for example, in FIGS. 3A-C and thus the drawings show the structure recited in Claim 15.

For the above reasons, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the EXAMINER'S Drawing Objection.

Section 102(b) Rejections

The EXAMINER rejects Claims 1 and 15 to 16 under 35 U.S.C. section 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,053,688 (Cheng). More specifically, the EXAMINER cites FIGS. 1C and 8C (which is a non-existent figure), and Claim 16 of the Cheng patent to reject Claims 1 and 15 to 16. Claim 1, as currently amended, recites "a horizontally stationary member adapted to move vertically". Claims 15 and 16 recite similar limitations. The Cheng patent does not disclose such a limitation. More specifically, while describing a door removing mechanism 30, the Cheng patent states "The plate 32 and rod 34 is moved back three or more inches from the inserted position of FIG. 1b, where the door 24 is attached to plate 32." (Col. 2, lines 25-27). Such movement appears to be horizontal movement,

and therefore, neither the plate 32 nor the rod 34 is a horizontally stationary member.

Because the EXAMINER cites to a non-existent figure (e.g., FIG. 8C) to reject Claims 1 and 15 to 16, Applicant respectfully requests further clarification or withdrawal of the rejection. Even if the EXAMINER meant to cite FIG. 2A of the Cheng patent, such embodiment does not disclose "a horizontally stationary member adapted to move vertically". According to the Cheng patent,

Door opening mechanism 116 is positioned in clean environment 150 and is used to remove the door 138 of pod 120 to allow access to the wafers stored in the pod. Mechanism 116 includes an engagement plate 152, and extending support 154, a grounded portion 156, and an actuator 158. Engagement plate 152 translates along the x-axis 160 as supported by support 154, which is coupled through grounded portion 156 to actuator 158. Actuator 158 is coupled to computer 134 by bus 159 and is controlled to move the engagement plate 152 in either direction along the x-axis 160.

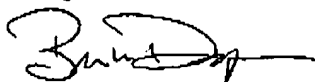
(Cheng, col. 6, lines 42-49). Therefore, at least the engagement plate 152 and the support 154 of the door opening mechanism 116 do not appear to be horizontally stationary. Further, no horizontally stationary portions of the door opening mechanism appear to be adapted to move vertically. Further, according to Claim 16 of the Cheng patent, the "door opening mechanism is constrained to move in an x-y plane and not in said z-direction". For the above reasons, the Cheng patent does not disclose every limitation of Claims 1 and 15 to 16. Consequently, Applicant respectfully submits Claims 1 and 15 to 16 are not anticipated by the Cheng patent.

The EXAMINER rejects Claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,079,935 (Brunner) and U.S. Patent No. 6,010,299 (Jesswein). The Brunner patent appears to describe a forklift truck having "a frame, a cab including a roof to protect the driver and a lift support

structure connected to the frame." (Brunner, Abstract). The Jesswein patent appears to describe a "device for lifting and positioning building materials at different heights and angles." (Jesswein, Abstract). However, neither the Brunner nor Jesswein patent relates to wafers, and therefore, neither patent discloses "a wafer carrier door receiver adapted to receive a wafer carrier door" as required by Claim 1. Consequently, the Applicant respectfully submits Claims 1 and 2 are not anticipated by the Brunner or Jesswein patent.

For the above reasons, the Applicant believes the claims are in condition for allowance, and respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the same. The Applicant does not believe any fees are due regarding this Amendment. If any fees are required, however, please charge Deposit Account No. 04-1696. The Applicant encourages the EXAMINER to telephone the Applicant's attorney should any issues remain.

Respectfully Submitted,



Brian M. Dugan, Esq.
Registration No. 41,720
Dugan & Dugan, PC
Attorneys for Applicant
(914) 332-9081

Dated: 6/8, 2004
Tarrytown, New York